CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic identification tag comprising:

a means for permanently storing data in an unalterable fashion, said data being known as unalterable data;

a means for permanently storing data in an alterable fashion, said data being known as alterable data;

a means for communicating said unalterable data and said alterable data to an electronic identification reader.

2. The identification tag of claim 1 wherein said alterability is subject to permanent disablement.

3. The identification tag of claim 1 further comprising:

a means for altering said alterable data.

4. The identification tag of claim 3 further comprising:

a means for receiving data to be substituted for said alterable data by said altering means.

5. The identification tag of claim 2 wherein said unalterable storage means is a laser programmable read-only memory (laser PROM).

6. The identification tag of claim 2 wherein said alterable storage means is an electrically-erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM).

7. The identification tag of claim 1 further comprising:

a means for temporarily storing data, said data being known

as temporary data, said communicating means being capable of communicating said temporary data as well as said unalterable and alterable data to an electronic identification reader.

6. The identification tag of claim 5 wherein said temporary storage means is a first-in/first-out (FIFO) memory.

7. The identification tag of claim 5 wherein said temporary storage means is a random access memory (RAM).

10. An apparatus for altering data in the memory of an electronic identification tag independent of the reader comprising:

a means for receiving data from a user to be communicated to said tag;

a means for communicating said data to said tag.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said communicating means comprises:

a means for generating a reversing magnetic field;

a means for modulating said reversing magnetic field in accordance with said user-supplied data.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said magnetic field generating means comprises a coil, a first capacitor connected to one end of said coil, and a second capacitor connected to the other end of said coil, said coil and capacitors having an alternating voltage impressed across the series combination, the frequency of said alternating voltage being the resonant frequency of said series combination.

13. The apparatus of claim 10 further comprising an

electronic identification tag having a memory wherein the data stored in said memory is alterable.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the electronic identification tag comprises:

a means for altering said alterable data.

a means for receiving data to be substituted for said alterable data by said altering means.

8. 15. A method of storing and altering data in an electronic identification tag comprising the steps:

P1 receiving data to be permanently stored in memory in an unalterable fashion, said data being known as unalterable data;

P1 storing said unalterable data in an unalterable memory;

L receiving data to be stored in memory in an alterable fashion, said data being known as alterable data, said alterable data being permanently stored until purposely altered;

Ins C2 P1 storing said alterable data in an alterable memory.

9. 16. The method of claim 8 15 wherein said step of receiving C2 data is comprised of the steps:

P1 receiving data from a user to be communicated to said tag;

L transmitting said data to said tag.

10. 8 17. The method of claim 15 further comprising the steps:

P1 receiving data to be temporarily stored in memory, said data being known as temporary data; and

P1 storing said temporary data in temporary memory.

11. 10 18. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step:

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communicating said unalterable data, said alterable data, and said temporary data to an electronic identification reader.

12. An electronic identification system comprising a reader and at least one tag, said tag comprising:

a means for permanently storing data in an unalterable fashion, said data being known as unalterable data;

a means for permanently storing data in an alterable fashion, said data being known as alterable data;

a means for altering said alterable data;

a means for receiving data to be substituted for said alterable data by said altering means;

a means for communicating said unalterable data and said alterable data to an electronic identification reader;

said reader comprising:

a means for receiving data from a user to be substituted for said alterable data stored in said alterable storage means in said tag;

a means for communicating said received data from the user to said tag.

END